

Interpretations

What would you think if someone you knew well, but had not seen for a while passed close by to you in the street but did not even smile? Or if they completely ignored a text message you had sent them? Would you think something like, 'I must have done something to offend them', or 'I don't suppose they really like me'?

Patterns of biased thinking

Taking things personally: Supposing that some-body else's actions were directed, personally, towards you: for example, when someone leaves the room or looks away while you are talking.

Taking the blame: Taking responsibility when it is not yours: 'He was really silent. It must be my fault. I wonder what I did wrong?'

Mind-reading: Believing that you know what others are thinking: 'She thinks I'm not talkative enough'; 'He doesn't like people who are shy'; 'They know just how hopeless I am at this'.

Discounting the positive: Rejecting good things as if they did not count (or using a negative filter): 'She only said that to make me feel better'; 'Anybody should be able to order a meal. Doing that OK is no big deal'; 'They were just being polite'.

Emotional reasoning: Mistaking feelings for facts: 'I'm so embarrassed, I know everyone is looking at me'; supposing you *are* inadequate because that's the way you feel.

Catastrophising: Thinking that if something goes wrong it will be a disaster: 'If I put a foot wrong this relationship is totally doomed'; 'If this goes badly I will never be able to show my face here again'.

Over-generalising: Assuming that because something happened once, this means it will always happen: for example, because you spilled a drink, or failed to see a joke, you will always do something clumsy or miss the point.

Predicting the future, or fortune telling: 'I'll never be able to feel comfortable talking to someone attractive'; 'I'll always be on my own'; 'Nobody will ever invite me along'.

Labelling, or name-calling: 'I'm useless ... inept . . . stupid . . . inferior'; 'Other people are unfriendly . . . critical . . . hostile . . . superior'.

Wishful thinking: Supposing things would be better if they were different. 'If only I were cleverer . . . more attractive . . . wittier . . . younger . . . more like others.'